

Articles and Sermons :: The Early Church Fathers on the Reality of Hell

The Early Church Fathers on the Reality of Hell - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2012/5/13 23:48

Ignatius of Antioch

Corrupters of families will not inherit the kingdom of God. And if they who do these things according to the flesh suffer death, how much more if a man corrupt by evil reaching the faith of God for the sake of which Jesus Christ was crucified? A man become so foul will depart into unquenchable fire, and so will anyone who listens to him (Letter to the Ephesians 16:1-2).

Second Clement

If we do the will of Christ, we shall obtain rest; but if not, if we neglect his commandments, nothing will rescue us from eternal punishment (Second Clement 5:5).

Justin Martyr

No more is it possible for the evildoer, the avaricious, and the treacherous to hide from God than it is for the virtuous. Every man will receive the eternal punishment or reward which his actions deserve. Indeed, if all men recognized this, no one would choose evil even for a short time, knowing that he would incur the eternal sentence of fire. On the contrary, he would take every means to control himself and to adorn himself in virtue, so that he might obtain the good gifts of God and escape the punishments (First Apology 12).

shall come from the heavens in glory with his angelic host, when he shall raise the bodies of all the men who ever lived. Then he will clothe the worthy in immortality; but the wicked, clothed in eternal sensibility, he will commit to the eternal fire, along with the evil demons (ibid. 52).

The Martyrdom of Polycarp

Fixing their minds on the grace of Christ, despised worldly tortures and purchased eternal life with but a single hour. To them, the fire of their cruel torturers was cold. They kept before their eyes their escape from the eternal and unquenchable fire (Martyrdom of Polycarp 2:3).

Athenagoras

We are persuaded that when we are removed from this present life we shall live another life, better than the present one. . . . Then we shall abide near God and with God, changeless and free from suffering in the soul . . . or if we fall with the rest, a worse one and in fire; for God has not made us as sheep or beasts of burden, a mere incidental work, that we should perish and be annihilated (Plea for the Christians 31).

Theophilus of Antioch

Give studious attention to the prophetic writings and they will lead you on a clearer path to escape the eternal punishments and to obtain the eternal good things of God.... will examine everything and will judge justly, granting recompense to each according to merit. To those who seek immortality by the patient exercise of good works, he will give everlasting life, joy, peace, rest, and all good things. . . . For the unbelievers and for the contemptuous and for those who do not submit to the truth but assent to iniquity, when they have been involved in adulteries, and fornications, and homosexualities, and avarice, and in lawless idolatries, there will be wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish; and in the end, such men as these will be detained in everlasting fire (To Autolycus 1:14).

Irenaeus

The penalty increases for those who do not believe the Word of God and despise his coming. . . . It is not merely temporal, but eternal. To whomsoever the Lord shall say, "Depart from me, accursed ones, into the everlasting fire," they will be

damned forever (Against Heresies 4:28:2).

Hippolytus

Standing before judgment, all of them, men, angels, and demons, crying out in one voice, shall say: "Just is your judgment!" And the righteousness of that cry will be apparent in the recompense made to each. To those who have done well, everlasting enjoyment shall be given; while to the lovers of evil shall be given eternal punishment. The unquenchable and unending fire awaits these latter, and a certain fiery worm which does not die and which does not waste the body but continually bursts forth from the body with unceasing pain. No sleep will give them rest; no night will soothe them; no death will deliver them from punishment; no appeal of interceding friends will profit them (Against the Greeks 3).

Minucius Felix

I am not ignorant of the fact that many, in the consciousness of what they deserve, would rather hope than actually believe that there is nothing for them after death. They would prefer to be annihilated rather than be restored for punishment. . . . Nor is there measure nor end to these torments. That clever fire burns the limbs and restores them, wears them away and yet sustains them, just as fiery thunderbolts strike bodies but do not consume them (Octavius 34:12-5:3).

Cyprian of Carthage

An ever-burning Gehenna and the punishment of being devoured by living flames will consume the condemned; nor will there be any way in which the tormented can ever have respite or be at an end. Souls along with their bodies will be preserved for suffering in unlimited agonies. . . . The grief at punishment will then be without the fruit of repentance; weeping will be useless, and prayer ineffectual. Too late will they believe in eternal punishment, who would not believe in eternal life (To Demetrian 24).

Cyril of Jerusalem

We shall be raised therefore, all with our bodies eternal, but not all with bodies alike; For if a man is righteous, he will receive a heavenly body, that he may be able worthily to hold converse with angels; but if a man is a sinner, he shall receive an eternal body, fitted to endure the penalties of sins, that he may burn eternally in fire, nor ever be consumed. And rightly will God assign this portion to either company; for we do nothing without the body. We blaspheme with the mouth, and with the mouth we pray. With the body we commit fornication, and with the body we keep chastity. With the hand we rob, and by the hand we bestow alms; and the rest in like manner. Since then the body has been our minister in all things, it shall also share with us in the future the fruits of the past (Catechetical Lectures 18:19).

Re: The Early Church Fathers on the Reality of Hell , on: 2012/5/14 21:53

Good resource. thank you for posting it.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2012/5/15 20:45

I am not sure if I am even allowed to respond on this topic, but for the sake of open discussion and balance here goes:

In his book "The Origin and History of the Doctrine of Endless Punishment," Thomas Thayer makes a compelling case that the idea of endless punishment arose from Egyptian religion, was later absorbed from that source into Greco-Roman religion, and then was adopted by the Jews in the inter-testamental period. Then, from the Jewish and Grecian sources, it found its way into the Christian church by the time of Tertullian.

He also demonstrates the bad fruit that the doctrine produced in the Medieval Church.

The book can be read online here:

<http://www.tentmaker.org/books/OriginandHistory.shtml>

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2012/5/15 21:05

Again we ask that you would refrain from promoting your agenda of promoting the idea of an unteternal hell. SermonIndex stands in line with all the church fathers and orthodox believers throughout the centuries that have held to this doctrine. So we ask that you would not further promote other ideas on these forums. As per the "SermonIndex Community Guiding Principles" we are very strong on not allowing these forums to be controlled by these agendas. If persisted we will simply have to ask you to leave participation from the discussion forum section of the site.

Re: , on: 2012/5/15 22:42

TMK,

I have read alot of books over the years. More than the average christian.

But books they are.

They are not THE WORD OF GOD.

THE revealed word of God is the Holy Scriptures.

All books no matter how good. All Doctrines no matter how good. Must ALWAYS be measured by what the scriptures say.

This must be the default response of every born again christian.

Following are all the scriptures that contain the word Hell.

There are other scriptures that expound on the eternal torment. I have not posted them here.

As the moderator has said it's best not to push your denial of what the scriptures says on this forum.

However, I post these for you to look at and try and resolve in your mind to resubmit to what God has said from the scriptures alone.

I know you say you have already done this through years of study.

I hope you will empty your cup of book knowledge and re fill it with the plain simple revelation of God Himself on this doctrine.

De 32:22 For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.

2Sa 22:6 The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me;

Job 11:8 It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?

Job 26:6 Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.

Ps 9:17 The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.

Ps 16:10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Ps 18:5 The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.

Ps 49:15 ¶ But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah.

Ps 55:15 Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among

ng them.

Ps 86:13 For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.

Ps 116:3 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.

Ps 139:8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

Pr 5:5 Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.

Pr 7:27 Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.

Pr 9:18 But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell.

Pr 15:11 Â¶ Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?

Pr 15:24 Â¶ The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.

Pr 23:14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.

Pr 27:20 Â¶ Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.

Isa 5:14 Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.

Isa 14:9 Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

Isa 14:15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

Isa 28:15 Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:

Isa 28:18 And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.

Isa 57:9 And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto hell.

Eze 31:16 I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the pit: and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth.

Eze 31:17 They also went down into hell with him unto them that be slain with the sword; and they that were his arm, that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the heathen.

Eze 32:21 The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of hell with them that help him: they are gone down, they lie uncircumcised, slain by the sword.

Eze 32:27 And they shall not lie with the mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised, which are gone down to hell with their weapons of war: and they have laid their swords under their heads, but their iniquities shall be upon their bones, though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living.

Am 9:2 Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down:

Jon 2:2 And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and

d thou heardest my voice.

Hab 2:5 ¶ Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people:

Mt 5:22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Mt 5:29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Mt 5:30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Mt 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Mt 11:23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

Mt 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Mt 18:9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

Mt 23:15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

Mt 23:33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

Mr 9:43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

Mr 9:45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

Mr 9:47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:

Lu 10:15 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.

Lu 12:5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

Lu 16:23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

Ac 2:27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Ac 2:31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

Jas 3:6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

2Pe 2:4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

Re 1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Re 6:8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

Re 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

Re 20:14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.
(KJV)

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2012/5/16 7:37

Ok- I concede. I promise not to make any further comment on any post regarding hell. I do not have an "agenda." I have only responded to other posts; I do not believe I have initiated any on this topic. I promise not to do so.

But I would like to ask one question: Some of you on this forum may have at one time held a Calvinist view and over time moved to an Arminian view, or vice-versa. Some of you may have at one time held a dispensational "left behind" view of eschatology, but over time moved to some other end time view (Art Katz was not a pre-tribber), or vice-versa.

If that is the case, and your views have changed, how did that happen? The Bible did not change.

Re: , on: 2012/5/16 17:03

Maybe you should start a new thread with that question. it may get more response instead of being "hidden" in this topic.
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Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2012/5/16 19:02

Quote:
-----But I would like to ask one question: Some of you on this forum may have at one time held a Calvinist view and over time moved to an Arminian view, or vice-versa. Some of you may have at one time held a dispensational "left behind" view of eschatology, but over time moved to some other end time view (Art Katz was not a pre-tribber), or vice-versa.

If that is the case, and your views have changed, how did that happen? The Bible did not change.

The obvious answer to this is that Calvinism and Arminianism are both orthodox soteriological views. Pretrib, posttrib and pantrib are all orthodox eschatological views. We can disagree on non-essential doctrines. Heaven and Hell are both essential eschatological doctrines. These are not up for debate.

And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him! (Luke 12:4, 5 NKJV)

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2012/5/16 20:37

quote:

"The obvious answer to this is that Calvinism and Arminianism are both orthodox soteriological views. Pretrib, posttrib and pantrib are all orthodox eschatological views. We can disagree on non-essential doctrines. Heaven and Hell are both essential eschatological doctrines. These are not up for debate."

No fair! I promised not to respond :)

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2012/5/16 20:56

I shudder to post light hearted comments in a thread of such eternal importance and significance. Hell is eternal. It is a terrible truth. May the Lord Himself give us grace to receive "some" of the gravity of this truth and let it build in us a sobriety. There is a great need for evangelicals to realize that the spread of the Gospel is needed not only for God's glory but that souls are at stake.

The quotes by these church fathers are precious, sobering and show their commitment to the life of discipleship and narrow way to heaven in light of eternal damnation and judgment.

God is love and desires no one to perish but all to come to Him! May we be part of that solution.

I am locking this thread to keep this as a resource rather than an "open field" for people to share "what they think" which compared to the clear truth of scripture on this topic is not worthwhile to even think of. Is there a hell? We do not even ask that question. Yes there is. And may God give us grace to see the ramifications.

I personally feel a lack of letting this truth and reality really change the way I love others and give them the gospel of grace.